



EBN MOSTAWFĪ, ABU'L- BARAKĀT ŠARAF-AL-DĪN MOBĀRAK

EBN MOSTAWFĪ, ABU'L-BARAKĀT ŠARAF-AL-DĪN MOBĀRAK b. Aḥmad b. Mobārak Erbelī (564-637/1168-1239), historian of Erbel. Both his father and his uncle, Šafī-al-Dīn 'Alī, who translated Ġazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-molūk* from Persian into Arabic, were also financial administrator (*mostawfī*). Abu'l-Barakāt did not limit himself to arithmetical knowledge, which was essential for such an office, but was also well versed in rhetoric, prosody, grammar, and Hadith. Erbel in his days was an independent and prosperous city-state under the rule of Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Kögoborī (r. 586-630/1191-1232), who is well known for his many charitable institutions and for initiating the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet during the first twelve days of Rabī' I (Ebn Kallekān, IV, pp. 113-21). Not only during these days but all the year round, Erbel was the center of attraction for poets, learned men, and merchants throughout the period of Kögoborī's rule. Abu'l-Barakāt, who was promoted to the rank of vizier (629/1231), competed with his master in encouraging learning, in patronizing poets and scholars, and in welcoming foreigners. When the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mostanṣar took Erbel upon Kögoborī's death, Ebn Mostawfī lost his office and stayed at home, content to pursue his life as an author. Not long afterward, the city was invaded by the Mongols (634/1236), and Abu'l-Barakāt, one of the few who could escape, found refuge in the city of Mosul,



where he lived until his death.

His history of Erbel (in four volumes, of which only one is extant; Chester Beatty, MS no. 4098) owes much to his good relations with the native inhabitants of Erbel and the foreigners. Although the book is basically a biographical dictionary, one can analogically infer from other city histories in Arabic that it must have contained an introductory chapter on the city itself and its topography. Indeed, much information can be culled from the biographies about the social and literary life in Erbel, as well as about the author himself. His commentary on Abū Tammām's and Motanabbī's *dīvāns* (part of which is extant; see Brockelmann, *GAL*, S. I, p. 136) reveals a wide knowledge of prose, verse, and humorous sayings which have not come down to us. It is not easy to evaluate Abu'l-Barakāt's poetry, because his *dīvān*, which Ebn Kallekān praises greatly, is also lost.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(For cited works not given in detail, see "Short References.")

Šams-al-Dīn Abū 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Ḍahabī, *Ketābal-'ebar men aḳbār al-bašar memman 'abar V*, Kuwait, 1966, pp. 155-56.

A. Dīānat, "Ebn-e Mostawfī Erbelī" in *DMBE IV*, pp. 608-09.

Ebn Mostawfī, *Tarīk Erbel*, ed. S. Šaqqār, 2 vols., Baghdad, 1980.

Idem, *Šarḥ moškel men dīwān Abī Tammām wa'l-Motanabbī*, ed. M. 'A. 'Azzām, 10 vols, Cairo, 1935.

Ebn Kallekān, ed. 'Abbās, IV, pp. 147-53.

Ebn al-Fowaṭī, *al-Ḥawādeṭ al-jāme'a*, Baghdad, 1931, p. 130.

Soyūṭī, *Bōḡyat al-wo'āt*, Cairo, 1316, p. 384.

Ebn al-Ša'ār, *Oqūd al-jomān*, MS East Eff., Istanbul, no. 2323, VI, fols. 34 f.



F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Leiden, 1952, p. 382.